

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) A near-field photomask comprising: made up of
a light shield film and openings formed in said light shield film,
wherein the openings generate near-field light in response to receiving light incident
thereon, wherein the generated near-field light is usable ~~said photomask being used~~ to expose an
exposure target with the a near-field light ~~generated through the openings,~~

wherein the openings formed in said light shield film, which comprise two or more
parallel rows of first slit openings each having a width smaller than 100 nm, and two or more
parallel rows of second slit openings having a width smaller than 100 nm, extending
perpendicularly to two or more parallel rows of first slit openings, and interlinking at least two of
said rows of first slit openings, comprising means for forming a plurality of discrete, spaced
apart latent-dot-image formed areas, spaced apart from each other along two perpendicular
directions on the exposure target in response to each of the openings receiving polarized light
having an electric field component parallel to the two or more parallel rows of first slit openings
~~two or more parallel rows of first slit openings each having a width smaller than 100 nm, and~~
~~a second slit opening having a width smaller than 100 nm and extended perpendicularly to said~~
~~rows of first slit openings while interlinking at least two of said rows of first slit openings.~~

2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently Amended) A near-field photomask according to Claim 1, wherein the width of said second slit opening is equal to a width of said light shield film positioned between two adjacent ~~two of said~~ first slit openings.

4. (Currently Amended) A near-field photomask according to Claim 3, wherein the openings formed in said light shield film are configured and positioned to generate near-field light in a square dot pattern on an the exposed area of ~~said the~~ exposure target ~~has a square dot pattern~~.

5. (Currently Amended) A near-field photomask according to Claim 1, wherein a plurality of second slit openings are arranged at a predetermined interval.

6. (Currently Amended) A near-field exposure apparatus comprising:
a near-field photomask according to Claim 1;
light illuminating means for illuminating said near-field photomask with a polarized light, which has an electric field component parallel to said rows of first slit openings, ~~to said near-field photomask~~; and

means for positioning said near-field photomask ~~close to said exposure target up to~~ at a distance from the exposure target within a near-field region thereof.

7. (Withdrawn) A dot pattern forming method including a step of forming a dot pattern by using a near-field exposure apparatus according to Claim 6.

8. (Withdrawn) A dot pattern forming method according to Claim 7, wherein a dot of said dot pattern is a quantum dot.

9. (Withdrawn) A dot pattern forming method according to Claim 7, wherein a dot of said dot pattern is a sub-wavelength structure.

10. (Withdrawn) A dot pattern forming method according to Claim 7, wherein a dot of said dot pattern is a localized plasmon generating structure.

11. (Withdrawn) A dot pattern forming method according to Claim 7, wherein said dot pattern has a plurality of dots formed in an array.

12. (Withdrawn) A device manufactured by a dot pattern forming method according to Claim 7.